

Abstract of the Disclosure

The present invention provides a network device that fully utilizes the available space in a standard telco rack through the use of multiple mid-planes. Full utilization of available space allows a high switching capacity network device including both physical layer switch/router subsystems and upper layer switch/router subsystems to be fit in one telco rack. Inter-mid-plane connections may be provided by connecting switch fabric cards and/or control processor cards to each of the mid-planes. Providing a multi-layer network device in one telco rack allows for intelligent layer 1 switching (for example, dynamic network connection set up), allows for one network management system to control both layer 1 and upper layer networks and eliminates grooming fees. Compared with separate layer 1 and upper layer network devices or a multi-layer network device occupying multiple telco racks, a single network device saves valuable telco site space and reduces expenses by sharing overhead such as the chassis, power and cooling.

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